

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A data processing method for maintaining and customizing a list of words, phrases, and abbreviations that are standard in a profession, industry, trade or occupation, for insertion of abbreviations from the list into text, for converting selected words and phrases in the text to abbreviations, for converting selected abbreviations in the text to words and phrases, and for automatically converting a number of words and phrases to abbreviations, and abbreviations to words and phrases, throughout the text, comprising the steps of:

a) storing in a memory a first data structure encoding a plurality of words and corresponding abbreviations;

b) storing in a memory a second data structure encoding a plurality of abbreviations and corresponding words;

c) selecting a word in the text to be converted to an abbreviation and converting the selected word to a corresponding abbreviation using the first data structure; and

d) selecting an abbreviation in the text to be converted to a word and converting the abbreviation to a word using the second data structure.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of adding to, editing, updating and customizing the first data structure and second data structure.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the word is selected by the user using a keyboard command.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the word is selected by the user using a mouse.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the abbreviation is selected by the user using a keyboard command.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the abbreviation is selected by the user using a mouse.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of scanning the text for words to be converted to abbreviations and converting words selected by the data processing method to corresponding abbreviations.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of scanning the text for abbreviations to be converted to words and converting abbreviations selected by the data processing method to corresponding words.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of displaying a list of suggested abbreviations corresponding to the selected word and receiving input from the user to choose the desired abbreviation.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of displaying a list of suggested words corresponding to the selected abbreviation and receiving input from the user to choose the desired word.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of displaying a list of suggested abbreviations corresponding to the selected words and receiving input from the user to choose the desired abbreviation.

12. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of displaying a list of suggested words corresponding to the selected abbreviations and receiving input from the user to choose the desired word.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of the user selecting an abbreviation from the first data structure and inserting the abbreviation into the text at a position selected by the user.

15. A data processing method for maintaining and customizing a list of words, phrases, and abbreviations that are standard in a profession, industry, trade or occupation and for allowing the user to insert abbreviations from the list at any position in a text, comprising the steps of:

- a) storing in a memory a first data structure encoding a plurality of words and corresponding abbreviations;
- b) the user instructing the data processing method to select a position in the text for insertion of an abbreviation;
- c) displaying a list of words and corresponding abbreviations from the first data structure;
- d) the user instructing the data processing method to select an abbreviation from the list; and
- e) inserting the selected abbreviation at the selected position in the text.

16. The data processing method of claim 15, further comprising a step of adding to, editing, updating and customizing the first data structure and second data structure.

17. A data processing apparatus for maintaining and customizing a list of words, phrases, and abbreviations that are standard in a profession, industry, trade or occupation, for insertion of abbreviations from the list into text, for converting selected words and phrases in the text to abbreviations, for converting selected abbreviations in the text to words and phrases, and for automatically converting a number of words and phrases to abbreviations, and abbreviations to words and phrases, throughout the text, comprising:

- a) a computer having a memory, a central processing unit, and an input/output unit;
- b) a first data structure recorded in the memory, the first data structure encoding a plurality of words and corresponding abbreviations;
- c) a second data structure recorded in the memory, the second data structure encoding a plurality of abbreviations and corresponding words;
- d) text in the memory containing words and abbreviations; and
- e) a computer program executing in the central processing unit and defining structural and functional relationships among the plurality of words and the plurality of abbreviations, the computer program receiving information on the words and abbreviations to be selected from an operator through the input/output unit, and the computer program responding to operator selection of words and abbreviations, converting selected words to corresponding abbreviations, converting selected abbreviations to corresponding words, and inserting words and abbreviations into the text.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the computer program displays a list of abbreviations corresponding to selected words to the operator through the input/output unit.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the computer program displays a list of words corresponding to selected abbreviations to the operator through the input/output unit.

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